



# DESERT DEVIL DISPATCH

*Volume I Issue 10*

*Published for the servicemembers of Kandahar Air Field*

*March 21, 2003*



The first Romanian-led combat patrol goes off without a hitch. See story on Page 3.

# President Approves Two New Medals For Soldiers

A presidential executive order signed Wednesday authorizes the Department of Defense to create two new military medals for service in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

The GWOT Expeditionary Medal will recognize service members who participate in an expedition to combat terrorism on or after Sept.



11, 2001. This is limited to those who deploy as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The GWOT Service Medal will recognize service in military operations to combat terrorism on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

This is limited to Operation Noble Eagle and to those service members who provide support to Operation Enduring Freedom from outside the area of eligibil-

ity designated for the GWOT Expeditionary Medal.

The medals were recommended by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld "in response to our Nation's global efforts to suppress terrorism, and the significant contributions members of the Armed Forces bring to bear on the long-term resolution of this threat."

Specific eligibility for these medals will be established by DoD award policy. The combatant commander has the authority to award the medals for approved operations to units and personnel deployed within his or her theater. Each service department will prescribe the appropriate regulations for processing and wearing of the medals.



Members of the U.S. armed forces and Coast Guard are eligible for the medals to include National Guard and Reserve troops activated to support approved operations. Civilians, foreign nationals and foreign military are not eligible. It will take up to twelve months to produce and stock the medal in department supply systems.

Future authorization for these medals will be considered and approved by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff if the war on terrorism expands.

(Information courtesy DOD News)

## Purple Heart Awarded to 82nd Soldier



U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Keith Kluwe

Maj. Gen. John R. Vines, Coalition Task Force 82 commander, reaches to shake the hand of Sgt. Christopher M. Connolly, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, after presenting him the Purple Heart Medal in a ceremony Mar. 17 at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan. Connolly was wounded earlier this year during combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Desert Devil Dispatch falls under the supervision of Task Force Devil.

### Task Force Devil Commander:

Col. John F. Campbell

Task Force Devil Command Sgt. Maj: Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Kalinowski

82nd Airborne Public Affairs:

Maj. Robert Gilpin

Romanian Public Affairs:

Capt. Constantin Hertanu



Desert Devil Dispatch, a U.S. Army newsletter, is produced by the 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Pennsylvania Army National Guard at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan.

### Commander:

1st Lt. Cory Angell

### NCOIC:

Staff Sgt. Kevin Askew

### Editor/Layout/Graphics:

Spc. Jim Wagner

### Photojournalist:

Cpl. Keith A. Kluwe

In accordance with AR 360-1, this newsletter is an authorized unofficial publication for members of the U.S. military. The contents of *Desert Devil Dispatch* are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, Department of Defense, or the Department of the Army. All submissions are subject to editing for size and content.

If you would like to receive the Dispatch electronically, please send an email to jim1wag@yahoo.com



# Romanian-planned Patrol a Success in Province

Story and photos by Cpl. Keith Kluwe  
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The first Romanian Army led combat mission concluded successfully Mar. 13 when the large joint Romanian and U.S. Army ground assault convoy returned to Kandahar Air Field here just before sunrise.

The mission began Mar. 8 when elements of the Romanian Army's 812<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion and elements of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and other supporting units left Kandahar Air Field for a 220 km (130 miles) convoy into the Zobol province with the mission of finding and destroying a suspected cave and enemy cache site and also to provide humanitarian aid to villages nearby.

The roads between Kandahar Air Field and the area of operation were unforgiving on both vehicles and soldiers in the convoy. Some vehicles had mechanical problems, but they were all solved in route. All the convoy elements that left Kandahar made it to the temporary fire base set up in the Zobol province and back.

Romanian soldiers discovered the suspect cave their first day in the area, near the Afghan village of Amak, but proved



Romanian soldiers from the 812th Infantry Bn. receive a convoy brief on Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan before driving to the Zobol province to execute Operation Carpathians' Thunder.

to be empty when coalition forces arrived. The cave, which was destroyed by soldiers from the 731<sup>st</sup> Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company here, had a man-made entrance and two ventilation shafts leading from the back of it. The explosion was loud enough to send all the animals grazing in the area running back up the valley.

While the cave was being rigged for

destruction, civil affairs soldiers from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne and 812<sup>th</sup> Infantry met with village elders in Amak to discuss issues important to the village. The village elders requested help in the form of

see **PATROL**, page 4



An 82mm mortar crew from the Romanian Army's 812th Infantry Battalion "Carpathians' Hawks" is illuminated by the blast from their 82 mm mortar after firing a round during live-fire training during Operation Carpathians' Thunder March 12 in the Zolbol Province of Afghanistan.



A CH-47 Chinook helicopter from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment flies over Kandahar Air Field Mar. 11 at sunset.



### **PATROL**, from page 5

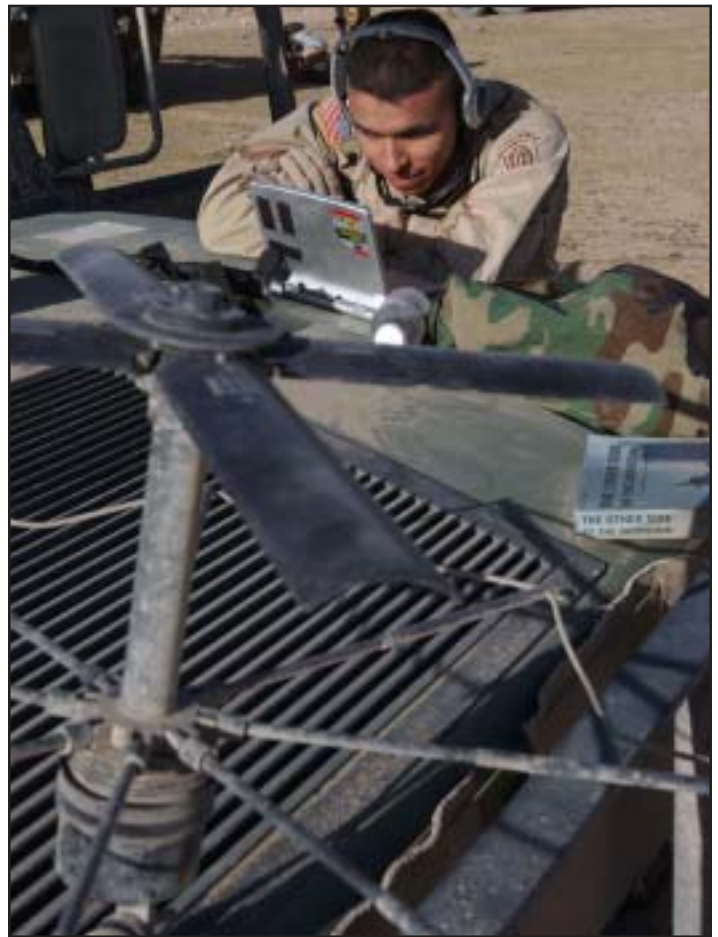
a well for drinking water and one for irrigation, and a school to be share by four villages in the area.

The reception received at each village was very positive and friendly. Village leaders shared tea with both U.S. and Romanian soldiers. One village even sent a tray of tea to soldiers providing perimeter security.

The civil affairs soldiers wrote down their requests and left Humanitarian Daily Rations, clothes and new shoes to be distributed in the village. The village elders were also given two solar-powered radios so they could help keep members of the village current on news around the globe.

Village leaders had heard of the possible war in Iraq and were worried that their request would be forgotten in the mass migration of troops to the Persian Gulf region, but they were assured that the coalition and the United States are committed to supporting the people and the national government of Afghanistan.

Three other villages in the area also received humani-



**TOP LEFT:** A soldier from the 812th Infantry Battalion "Carpathians' Hawks" checks his communication equipment at Kandahar Air Field prior to the start of Operation Carpathians' Thunder Mar. 8. **ABOVE:** Spc. John Ground, Headquarters and Headquarters Co. 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, takes a break after his radio watch to catch a movie on his portable DVD player.



**LEFT:** Maj. Joel Hamby, center, brigade fire support officer, discusses where the security perimeter should be set up with Romanian army officers. **RIGHT:** An Afghan girl leans against a wall holding her new pair of shoes and a granola bar in a village in the Zabol province of Afghanistan.





# Airborne History

*American parachutists — Devils in Baggy Pants — are less than 100 meters from my outpost line. I can't sleep at night; they pop up from nowhere and we never know when or how they will strike next. Seems like the black-hearted devils are everywhere.....*

*(Translated from the diary of a dead German officer at Anzio - February 1944)*

## The Winter War: 82nd Ends Rhineland Operations

Story by Robert Anzuoni  
82nd Airborne Division Historian

**(Editor's Note: This is the last in a four-part series.)**

The 505<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment advanced east another 1,500 yards and sent out patrols. By Feb. 10 the whole division was on the offensive again, moving east toward Zerkall on the Roer River. The advance encountered light resistance, but there were many minefields. By the end of the day, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division held the west bank of the Roer River.

The 517<sup>th</sup> was relieved from attachment to the division and the remaining units actively patrolled along the river. The next few days were spent preparing for future operations to include assault boat training for a possible river crossing to seize Nideggen. A patrol successfully crossed the river on the evening of the 17th, but the assault crossing did not take place. The following day the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (ID) began relieving the 82<sup>nd</sup> along the Roer. The participation of the 82<sup>nd</sup> in the Rhineland campaign was over.

Moving through the Hurtgen Forest and the Kall River Valley, the Division was witness to one of the great

tragedies of the war. The first hint to the troopers that something had gone wrong in the Hurtgen Forest was the mass of destroyed and abandoned vehicles along the trail from Vossenack to the bottom of the valley. On the side of the road lay many bodies of dead American soldiers from the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, which had fought there in the Fall of 1944. The bodies were just beginning to emerge from the snow that covered them in the winter. Several feet away

from American bodies were bodies of German soldiers — a strong statement of the fighting that occurred in the Hurtgen. Maj. Gen. James Gavin noted what the fighting must have been like. "It was savage, bitter, and at close quarters. It was an eerie scene, like something from the lower levels of Dante's 'Inferno.'"

The relief of the 82<sup>nd</sup> by the 9<sup>th</sup> ID continued until the 21st, and by Feb. 25 the division had returned to base camps near Reims, France. For nearly one month, the 82<sup>nd</sup> had participated in a bitter campaign in which troopers encountered fierce enemy resistance, dense minefields, and waist deep snow. However, the battle hardened veterans, along with many new replacements, continued the advance into enemy territory and seized all of their assigned objectives.

One hundred and sixty-nine All American troopers were killed in action by the time the 82<sup>nd</sup> was relieved from operations in the Rhineland.



Maj. Gen. James M. Gavin



**You might be  
Airborne if ...**



**you have pullup bars outside your  
kitchen door.  
— quinman (from partrooper.net)**



**Pvt. Murphy's Law**  
by Mark Baker



ABOVE: Hajjis deplane after returning from the Mecca Monday. BELOW: Afghans perform an ablution - or ritual purification - before praying.

## Last Hajj Flight Touches Down at Kandahar

*Story and Photos by Spc. Jim Wagner*  
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Soldiers from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division wrapped up the last Hajj flight Monday, putting an end to a mission that has great religious significance in this Muslim country.

Since the time of Hajj began in early January, more than 7,000 Afghans have filed through the gates of Kandahar to take an Ariana Airlines flight to Mecca.

Ensuring the experience was a success came down to 82<sup>nd</sup> members from Task Force Devil and support assets.

The Hajj is the one of the five pillars of Islam, an annual pilgrimage to the site of the final resting place of the prophet Mohammad – at Mecca in Saudi Arabia. To be considered a true Muslim, members of this religion must make the pilgrimage once in their life.

U.S. soldiers were responsible for providing a safe environment for Hajj pilgrims to load onto the aircraft in Kandahar and get to Saudi Arabia. There are four other Hajj departure sites in the country: Mazar-E-Sharif, Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat and Kabul.

Hajj departures from these cities were handled by the Islamic Transitional Gov-



ernment of Afghanistan/Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan. The only exception was Kandahar, which was run by the U.S. Army.

For U.S. troops in Afghanistan, a safe departure and arrival for Hajjies reaps goodwill that spreads throughout the six provinces served by Kandahar Air Field and is an important component of the Army's mission to win the hearts and minds of the civilian populace.

"The Hajjis are important in the Muslim culture; the people in villages look up to them informally as something like a village elder or mayor when they return," said. Lt. Col. Walt Pjetraj, a civil

military affairs officer at Kandahar.

When Hajjis return to their villages, he said, in addition to the stories they'll bring back about the pilgrimage will be stories of the Americans who helped them get there and back again.

"(Our) sheer presence made it a success," Pjetraj said. "What better way to get the word of the red, white and blue than to have them see us helping them."

For many Afghans, the flight was the first time many saw an American. Returning from a religious pilgrimage, exhausted and wanting only to get back home, many were nervous to see U.S. troops around the aircraft as they waited to deplane.

Z. Fateh, an Afghan interpreter working for the 82<sup>nd</sup>, said he boards each returning plane before Hajjis depart to reassure them.

"You could tell them over the aircraft public address system, but they never listen to that," Fateh said. "I'll just walk up and down the aisles and talk to them in small groups to tell them that the Americans are here to help them."

From the aircraft, Hajjis are taken to a staging area where they pick up their luggage and wait for busses to take them to the front gate and back to their homes.